361 lived in bazaar streets in the towns, or some-
563 times in separate villages, where they were served by low caste Hindu labourers; alternatively small groups of them might occupy Hindu villages where they had the ritual rank of Iravas (from whom they were chiefly converted), and usually held lands on the same terms of triennial tenure from Nayar kanakker.

564 The lower polluting castes and the exterior
783 castes had their own small temples, dedicated to their own deities. They were forbidden to approach the temples of the "good" castes and
564 might not take part in daily worship there. An-
796 nually, however, a large temple festival was
571 held in each Nayar, chiefly or royal Bhagavadi temple. At such a festival, representatives of all the lower castes of the village attended and performed ceremonies and dances peculiar to their caste at approriate distances from the temple. Such festivals apparently reinforced the mutual rights and obligations of the several castes and dramatized the solidarity and also the social distance between them. In accordance with the normal range of their social relations, members of the lower castes usually attended such festivals only in their own or adjacent villages. At the festivals of the chiefly temple of the nad, however, members of "good" castes throughout the nad were required to participate; similarly, at festivals of the royal temples, representatives of the "good" castes throughout the kingdom were called to attend and express their allegiance to the ruler and his deity.

631 cases were carried voluntarily by low caste
692 disputants of different castes to the Nayar ass-
681 embly, but this might also step in by forces in disputes which threatened the peace of the village. Punishments included beatings and fines
[56] to the temple. However, Nayars and Nambudiris had also the power of life and death over their serfs and might have these killed without recourse to a higher authority. Any Nayar had, for example, the right to spear at sight a Pulaya who accidentally touched him, refused to recede from his approach, or insulted a Nayar woman.

681 In the castes above the serfs, grave crimes
692 were carried to the court of the king. Murder, sacrilege, the wounding of a cow or of a Brahman, and theft from a man of "good" caste, were punishable by death. Brahmans and women, however, were never officially put to death. Brahmans were excommunicated by their own assemblies, women were sold into slavery with the Arabs. If, however, a Nayar woman fornicated with a man of lower caste (an offence legally punishable by excommunication and slavery) it is recorded that in fact her own brothers, with the tacit consent of [35] the ruler, would themselves spear her to death. The death sentence for men of the polluting castes was impalement, for Nayars, spearing, and for Muslims, hanging. Unsolved civil disputes between high caste men and Muslims were tried in the royal court by ordeal, usually of boiling oil.

564 It is interesting to notice that the higher the
571 caste, the wider the field of social relations.
631 For the serfs and lower polluting castes, this

was confined to the village or (in the case of the smaller castes) a group of adjacent villages. For retainer-Nayars, apart from their excursions in war, it was confined to the group of adjacent villages of one subcaste; for temple servants and Nayar village headmen, the nad; for naduvaris and kings, the kingdom; and for Nambudiris, Kerala. It may be hypothesized that this variation in the field of social relations of the different ranked orders of the society is intrinsic in any feudal system with centralized political institutions.

(4) Hypergamy in the Upper Castes

Each of the castes below middle class Nayars was endogamous, as is usually in the caste system throughout India. But among the higher "clean" castes, a complicated system of hypergamous unions linked the several groups. By hypergamy I mean the union of a man of higher caste with a woman of lower caste.

In discussing hypergamy, it is necessary first to explain the descent-system of Nambudiris. In the patrilineal [36] extended family of Nambudiris, only the eldest son was permitted to marry, with Vedic rites, within his own caste and beget children for his family. Younger sons had recognized liaisons (not initiated with Vedic rites and regarded by Nambudiris not as marriage but as concubinage) with women of the matrilineal castes, whose children belonged to the mother's caste and lineage by matrilineal descent. However, if in any generation the eldest Nambudiri son was was sterile, the second son

582 servant castes or between temple servants on
837 the one hand and royalty, chiefs or village headmen, who belonged to separate hierarchies.

582 Hypergamous unions, even more than other
613 unions between Nayars of the same subcaste,
837 emphasized the exclusively sexual role of the lovers and genitors of a Nayar lineage. In most circumstances a higher caste lover lived and ate in his natal household and was maintained by it; he visited his mistress after supper and left before breakfast, after which he took a purifying bath before re-entering his natal house. He might not eat in his mistress's household, and following the morning bath might not touch her or his children. The only exception to these
[144] residential rules arose in the case of Nambudiris who had liaisons with royal women. These were received as temporary occupants of the palace and housed in separate buildings at the expense of the royal lineage, at some distance from the buildings occupied by the princes and the royal women. Like all other Nambudiri genitors of Nayar children, however, they [39] visited their mistresses at night and in the daytime carried out their ritual duties in private, attended by their own Nambudiri cooks and serving men.

613 It is clear however that hypergamous liaisons,
837 though of an almost exclusively sexual nature,
● 571 knit together the several castes concerned with the secular administration and with the religious law and public rituals of the state. Though not recognized by them as kinsmen, elderly members of aristocratic Nayar and temple servant

613 lineages still take pride in the fact that for cen-
837 turies, their lineages have been partly fathered
571 by men of the higher castes of royalty, chiefs, and (particularly) priests. The allegiance of Nayar soldiers to their headmen, of headmen to their chiefs, and of chiefs to the king, was undoubtedly strengthened by this network of sexual ties, as was the unity of the secular and religious hierarchies, which might otherwise have been opposed.

613 IV The Traditional Lineage System of the Nayars

(1) Structure and Functions

[621] In each traditional village, four to six "military" Nayar lineages of one subcaste was present as retainers of the janmi. The retainer lineage commonly had a depth of nine to twelve generations and usually comprised between 12 to 100 members. It was called a taravad, derived from tara, the word for the raised foundation on which a house is built. Taravad can mean both the members of a lineage, living and dead, and the ancestral house from which they sprang: it corresponds to the English "house" in its sense both of ancestry and place. The members of a taravad are a group, usually of actual and not merely putative matrilineal kin, descended from a common ancestress (whose name may or may not be known), but they describe themselves as a group whose matrilineal forbears once lived in one house. That their lineage should be associated with the house befits the sedentary economy of the Nayars and the importance of their ancestral land. Powerful

592 together only by loyalty to the group as a whole
602 and a sense of pride in being able to submit to discipline from male elders for the sake of their natal kinswomen. A man may be extremely proud of his taravad and of his karanavan as a good manager and spokesman, but he has a less intimate personal relationship with him than does a patrilineal man with his father. In the Brahman patrilineal extended family, by contrast, individual interpersonal ties between father and son and between brothers, who form the core of the group, may be marked by deep devotion, while loyalty to the patrilineal lineage as a corporate unit, and its overall solidarity, are much weaker.

592 (c) The Splitting of Property-Groups
571 The property-groups of retainer Nayars divide at a particular point in their development. The Nayars themselves do not know this. They regard partition of the property-group as an unfortunate occurrence which takes place because of the greed or envy of individual men, or because of unwonted increase in the membership of the group. It is true that before the increase in population of the hundred years, individual property-groups must often have remained intact over many generations, simply reproducing their numbers. However, genealogies from the histories I collected of over thirty taravads show that retainer property-groups in fact partition with unfailing regularity at a particular point in their development. This occurs when the group contains two or more segments descended

from sisters, whose maternal uncles and brothers are all dead, and when each segment has an adult son or [63] grandson old enough to become karanavan in his own right. Since the armies were disbanded and men came home to live on their estates (about 1810), it is probable that groups have partitioned slightly more quickly than they formerly did, for over the past hundred years men have considered themselves old enough to become karanavans of new groups (if their uncles and older brothers are all dead) by the age of 30 to 40, whereas they appear traditionally to have been still in the army until about the age of 50. But the structure of the group at its time of partition appears to have been the same at all periods until the most recent(discussed later.) Traditionally, as long as the karanavan is own brother, mother's brother or mother's mother's brother to all members of the group, partition cannot take place, because men cannot separate from their mothers and sisters. A sibling group can never split into two, nor a junior man secede from his own mother's brother: the relationship between these men is an inter-personal one and they are within the same minimal segment of the lineage. Partition can take place only between men of different minimal segments (parallel cousins, a man and his classificatory mother's brother, etc.) who are no longer held together by common submission to a living karanavan of the parental or grandparental generation, and whose relationship is therefore structured in terms of the relationship between groups.

592 [64] Every woman is thus the potential founder
571 of a property-group, and often, after her brothers have in turn been karanavans and are dead, she lives to see her segment's property divided from that of her sisters, and her son or even daughter's son established as head of her group. However, some women do not of course become founders of groups, either because they have no children or because they have only daughters who themselves become founders in their own right when their sons are old enough. Again, a group of brothers with no sisters was traditionally unlikely to form a separate group, since they would have no women to perpetuate their group(or for that matter, to cook for them). They would be likely to remain volunatrily attached to a parallel segment, succeeding, along with their classificatory brothers, to karanavanship as they became in turn oldest member of the group. Alternatively they might split away and adopt one or more girls from collateral segments to perpetuate their separate group.

In all cases of partition, division of the property was stirpital: equal shares accrued to segments of the same order which were descended from sisters. The segment which contained the old karanavan at the time of partition usually retained the ancestral house.

592 (d) Kinship Relations within the Group
602 The karanavan was traditionally unequivocal
868 head of the group. He managed the property, built new houses, repaired the old, leased land from the janmi, and controlled [65] the labour

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
Central Kerala Nayar

or *kara-yōgam* (Logan, 1951, I: 87–88, 132–133). The functions of intra-caste administration of the Nayar assembly are discussed later in connection with the lineage.

The village headman, assisted by representatives from the Nayar retainers, judged small civil cases concerning debt, petty theft, or trespass. He appropriated the fines in these cases (Munro, quoted in Ayyar, 1938: 288). Individual Nayars also arbitrated in small civil disputes carried voluntarily to them by disputants within their own or the lower castes. Serfs came directly under the jurisdiction of their Nayar or Brahman masters, who had the power of life and death over them.

In the castes above the serfs, larger civil disputes and grave crimes were judged in the court of either chief or king. Chiefs' (*nāduvaris'*) judicial powers varied with the size of their armies, but feudatory princes (*svarūpis*) retained complete judicial rights with power over life and death (Ayyar, 1938: 272). So also did the Brahman managers of temple estates, although they called upon some local chief to carry out their judgments. Murder, sacrilege, treason, the wounding of a cow or of a Brahman, indecent assault of a woman, and grave theft from a man of "good" caste were generally punishable by death (*ibid.*: 282). Brahmans and women, however, were never officially executed by order of the king. All offenses among Brahmans were tried by an assembly of the Brahman neighborhood, which, with the local ruler's approval, might excommunicate the offender. If a woman of any caste above serfs was convicted of a capital offense the king had the right to sell her into slavery.

The higher the cast, the wider the field of social relations. Among the serfs and the higher polluting castes this was confined to a group of adjacent villages. Among temple servants, village headmen, and retainer Nayars (apart from their excursions in war) the field of social relations was the chiefdom. Among chiefs and royalty it was the kingdom, and among Brahmans, Kerala.

Hypergamy in the Upper Castes

Each of the castes below Nayar temple menials was endogamous, as is usual in the caste system throughout India. But among the higher "clean" castes the integration of political offices and of the larger territorial units was strengthened by hypergamous marriages. By hypergamy I mean the marriage of a woman of lower caste to a man of higher caste.

In discussing hypergamy it is necessary to explain the descent

4: Gough E-5 (1947-1949, 1952)1958 AWII Kerala AWII
Nayar

Act of 1947, moreover, low caste persons in general wish to enter the main court of the temple along with the higher castes and to propitiate the great deity. Alternatively, they build modern temples of their own dedicated to Sanskrit gods. They begin to shun the outer courtyards of temples populated by ghosts and devils and to leave these unpropitiated. Some Nāyars still believe that the lower castes have supernatural powers as sorcerers and lycanthropic witches, but believe that as the lower castes acquire education and "civilization" they voluntarily give up these powers. Others now deny that ghosts, witches, or sorcerers ever possessed powers at all.

All of these changes in belief and ritual are probably linked not only specifically to the collapse of *taravād* and caste as small birth-status groups, but more generally to the widening range of Nāyar social relations and to the relaxing of their former tight interdependencies in face-to-face relationships. As they move into a heterogeneous, mobile, urban setting composed partly of impersonal relationships with strangers, the Nāyars cease to regard the natural order as in all respects a moral order and cease to seek personal motives as the ultimate causes of misfortunes. The growth of scientific knowledge in schools and the spread of medical facilities also obviously influence beliefs about illness. This does not, of course, mean that the Nāyars and lower castes no longer require institutionalized modes of handling their aggressive impulses and their uncertainty in face of cosmic mysteries. In a few areas of living, new religious institutions have developed, which are outside the subject of this paper. In general, however, I think it is true to say that the scope of ritual beliefs and activities is shrinking[27] for Malabaris as a whole, and that as technology develops and new social arrangements become feasible, they concentrate more on the "how" of misfortunes, leaving the "why" to chance. Correspondingly, of course, conflict is increasingly handled through modern secular institutions (the law-court, the trades' union, the political party, the democratic election, etc.), which produce continuing social structural changes rather than serving to maintain harmony within traditional birth-status groups.

NOTES

[1] For a brief analysis of social change among the Nāyars, see E. K. Gough, "Changing Kinship Usages in the Setting of Political and Economic Change Among the Nāyars of Malabar," *Journal Royal Anth. Institute*, LXXXII (1952), 71-88.

[2] George P. Murdock, *Social Structure* (New York, 1949), p. 2.

[3] The Madras *Marumakkattayam* Act of 1933, and the Cochin Nāyar Act of 1937.

[4] Before the date of this Act, all division of ancestral property in a Nāyar *taravād* had been stirpital.

[5] For accounts of Nāyar propitiations of lineage ghosts, see E. Thurston, *Castes and Tribes of Southern India* (Madras, 1909), V, 362-3; F. Fawcett, *The Nāyars of Malabar*, Bull. Madras Govt. Museum (Madras, 1901), III, No. 3, 245-253; K. M. Panikkar, "Religion and Magic Among the Nayars," *Man*, XVIII, No. 7 (1918); V. K. Raman Menon, "Ancestor Worship Among the Nayars," *Man*, XX, No. 3 (1920); R. K. Pisharodi, *Ancestor Worship in Kerala* (1923).

[6] Menon, 1920.

[7] M. J. Levy, Jr., *The Family Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, 1949), pp. 168-9.

[8] F. Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans., Jas. Strachey (New York, 1950), pp. 51-63.

[9] M. Mead, *Male and Female* (New York, 1949), pp. 297-304.

[10] M. E. Opler, "An Interpretation of Ambivalence in Two American Indian Tribes," *Journal of Social Psych.*, VII (1936), 82-115.

[11] A. Kardiner and Associates, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York, 1945), pp. 112, 118ff, 167; M. Fortes, *The Web of Kinship Among the Tallensi* (Oxford, 1949), p. 334ff;

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
Kerala AWII

241 leads to the tree fruiting within two or three years, instead of four or five. The leaves that fall from the trees in gardens are used as green manure in the paddy fields and coconut gardens. No such thing as growing green manure is known. No wood or forest is near so that the people may bring the leaves.

242 In fact very little manuring takes place in the village. What is actually done in the cultivation of chief crops is to plough the land. Every year much is drawn from the soil, and nothing is returned to it. I have stated above that lands which returned Rs. 1,000 a year do not now return more than Rs. 400 or 500. The two most potent causes for this deterioration are the system of land tenure and the absence of manuring. Perhaps the second is the result of the first, but I think the want of agricultural knowledge is the cause of the want of manuring and scientific cultivation.

372 *Wood and fuel.*—The outer cover of the coconut, the leaves of the same, mango trunks, serve for fuel for the whole village, and they are obtained in plenty, but the price is rising with the general rise of prices.

[313] Wood for implements, building, etc., is obtained from Cochin State, brought in carts drawn by oxen or buffaloes.

342 *The village—Houses.*—For buildings granite is obtained from
361 a place four miles distant, mortar is prepared in the village, mud from the village itself, tiles from different places, the least distant being twenty miles away, for thatch the leaves of the coconut are used, iron things are bought in the bazaar. The houses in the village are all isolated from one another. Every part of the village is inhabited except the paddy fields. However, at the present day traders have a tendency to build their houses as near the road as possible and form streets. The people also have a tendency to live as near the temple as possible, and this has resulted in the formation of four streets, surrounding the temple on all the four sides. These streets form also the bazaar of the village. There are here about 100 houses.

361 The lands adjacent to the temple are occupied by Brahmans and Nayars. Any other place can be occupied by any family. The
571 houses of the low castes, high castes, and of other religions are intermingled. The same garden may be occupied by Muhammadans, Hindus and Christians, and they all live very amicably as if they belonged to one and the same religion.

735 The Pariahs, whose families are only three in number, occupy certain portions of the land of a big landlord. The landlord gives the Pariahs free houses and a certain allowance a month. He thinks it incumbent upon him to protect and maintain them. Their huts, though small, are yet tidy and neat. The allowance that was freely given them has now become a right. They follow certain industries and go to rich men's houses to beg twice a month, and they are given a certain quantity of rice.

342 There are 977 thatched houses, 313 tiled houses, no terraced houses.

286 *Crafts and industries.*—There are seven families of weavers consisting of 39 members, i.e., 14 men, 12 women, 13 children under fifteen years. They have been in the village from times long past. They weave a cloth 1 foot wide, 1¼ yards long, and this is used as undercloth. They also at times weave a cloth ¾ or 1